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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000281

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SUBJECT: EU-CHINA SUMMIT - A RELATIONSHIP BACK ON TRACK?

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Classified By: POLEC Counselor Charles O. Blaha for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (U) Summary: Emboffs called on MFA Asia Pacific Director Jiri Sitler and Human Rights and Transformation Policy Director Gabriela Dlouha for debriefs of the May 20 EU-China summit and the 27th EU-China human rights dialogue. Sitler said that there were few surprises during the summit discussions, but noted that the Chinese seemed particularly preoccupied with obtaining recognition as a market economy and with lifting the arms embargo. Dlouha noted that the dialogue on human rights went slightly better than the EU had anticipated, although she did note that the proof will come once the EU receives responses from the Chinese government on the individual human rights cases raised. She also noted that the Chinese pressed the EU on the Uighurs held in detention in Guantanamo. There will be a second EU-China summit this year, most likely in the autumn during the Swedish Presidency. End Summary.

Atmospherics - Little Chinese Flexibility

12. (SBU) Sitler apologized for the bare bones press release on the meeting, noting it had been impossible to negotiate a more substantive joint statement with the Chinese, who had insisted on going further than previously agreed language (China wanted to stress the one-China policy and comment on lifting the arms embargo). Sitler said the Chinese also made other unacceptable linkages and demonstrated no flexibility. According to Sitler, the Chinese complained throughout the visit that 1) the Czech PM had personally accepted a petition from Amnesty International just prior to the arrival of the Chinese Premier, and 2) journalists with a relationship to the Falun Gong had been accredited to attend the press conference (at which the Chinese refused to allow questions).

EU-China Human Rights Dialogue

13. (SBU) Human Rights and Transformation Policy Director Dlouha stated that there has been slow, but visible progress in this dialogue, which is now in its 13th year. As one modest example, Dlouha noted that the Chinese no longer challenge the EU's right to ask human rights questions of them, something that the EU has yet to overcome in its dealings with Russia. In advance of the human rights dialogue on May 15, the EU handed over a list of approximately 20 cases of special concern to the EU and raised three specific cases during the dialogue itself (that of Charter 08 movement leader Liu XiaoBo, human rights defender Gao ZhiSheng and AIDS activist Hu Jia). Dlouha noted, however, that the Chinese often take several weeks before they officially respond. Thus, the EU is reserving judgment on how much progress has actually been made until it receives the Chinese response.

Chinese Discuss Prevention of Torture, but Not Tibet

14. (SBU) Noting that the EU has found the Chinese to be amenable to discussing prevention of torture issues, Dlouha indicated that as a part of this human rights dialogue, the Czechs arranged a visit to a Czech detention center, so that the Chinese could see and discuss how the EU handles prisoners' rights. The Czech Ombudsman also participated in this visit and discussion. Dlouha also noted that the EU has pressed the Chinese hard on its use of the death penalty. Apparently the Chinese have approximately 68 criminal categories for which the death penalty is applicable and the EU has encouraged the Chinese to limit these categories. Where there has been very little movement on the part of China, however, is on discussion of the situation in Tibet. According to Dlouha, the Chinese have not budged from their position that Tibet is an internal matter and not a human rights concern. While the EU has previously raised the case of two Tibetans who were allegedly tortured and subsequently died in custody, the Chinese have never responded to EU requests for information on these specific cases.

Chinese Press on Uighurs and Guantanamo

15. (C) Dlouha noted that the one area that the Chinese pressed the EU was with respect to the Uighurs currently at Guantanamo. The Chinese made clear that they felt these detainees should be extradited to China, and not accepted by EU member states. They also apparently criticized Germany,

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Portugal and the United Kingdom for their public comments on this topic.

Cooperation in International Fora - Burma and Sudan

16. (SBU) At the summit, Sitler stated that the EU raised the recent arrest of Aung San Su Kyi and urged China to become more engaged. The Chinese stated that it was their hope that all parties would engage in a patient and consistent dialogue, which the international community, and especially the UN, should promote by establishing an easy atmosphere.⁸ The EU also pressed the Chinese during the human rights dialogue to be more helpful in international fora and specifically on Sudan. According to Dlouha the Chinese agreed to support the extension of the mandate of the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Sudan. When asked whether the EU pressed for more robust support from China on Sudan, Dlouha responded that the Chinese went no further than to comment on the mandate of the rapporteur.

Trade and Environment - No Surprises

17. (SBU) On the environment, energy and climate change, Sitler said EU Commission head Barroso took the lead. The Commission and the Presidency had hoped for a separate substantive statement on this issue, but the Chinese insisted on inserting non-climate related points and "the price became too high." During the discussion the Chinese listed a series of actions they planned to take relating to the environment and climate change, but Sitler said that Commission experts saw nothing new in what was said. He noted that this subject would also be discussed during an "autumn" EU-China summit during the Swedish Presidency, prior to the December Copenhagen meeting. On trade, the Chinese strongly rejected protectionism and indicated that they would consider buying ten percent of the potential IMF bond issue. The EU also raised IPR and market access. He added that nothing unexpected occurred during the summit discussions, although he noted that the Chinese seemed particularly focused on the lifting of the arms embargo and the market economy issue

(arguing that they were more of a market economy than Russia to which the EU responded that this was primarily a technical question) China did not fulfill the criteria). Sitler said they were discussing a possible meeting of Foreign Ministers on the margins of the Hanoi ASEM meeting next month.

Thompson-Jones